



January 6, 2017

The Honorable Gregg Harper
Committee on House Administration
1309 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

via electronic mail

My name is Aaron Ockerman and I am executive director of the Ohio Association of Election Officials. On behalf of Ohio's 88 bipartisan county boards of elections, I am writing to urge you to fully fund the United States Elections Assistance Commission (EAC). As Ohio's election professionals, we greatly value our partnership with the EAC. I will attempt to succinctly summarize the value they provide to us.

Ohio requires EAC certification for voting systems. Because of this Ohio has partnered with the EAC to create efficiencies and cost savings for the state in our testing process. Additionally, the state benefits from the rigorous standards and testing that the EAC conducts as part of its certification.

The EAC has worked with several Ohio counties to identify and address issues with their voting technology. The best example of this was in Cuyahoga Co. where the EAC, the county board of elections and the voting machine manufacturer's staff worked to identify an issue, develop a solution and get it certified before a critical primary election.

Additionally, the EAC worked with Ohio officials to develop Ohio's e-pollbook certification requirements. These requirements have since been adopted by Ohio and used to certify several e-pollbooks that are now either being used or considered for use by Ohio counties.

EAC research about ballot design and layout has been used across Ohio

to make ballots more usable and understandable for voters. Better ballot design leads to less “over votes” and “under votes” as well as greater confidence that votes will be counted as intended.

Finally, EAC survey data has been used by state and local officials in Ohio to evaluate operations and identify efficiencies and cost savings. Specifically, EAC data regarding provisional ballots has helped to identify areas where improvements can be made to lessen the use of provisional ballots, therefore, saving money while counting more ballots from eligible voters.

Now more than ever, local election officials needs the support of the EAC to be our voice in the nation’s capital. Please don’t short-circuit this important commission before it is able to refocus its efforts to improve elections around the county. Please vote to fully fund the EAC.

Sincerely,

Aaron Ockerman, Executive Director
Ohio Association of Election Officials